The Gates of Power: Monks, Courtiers, and Warriors in Premodern Japan. By Mikael S. Adolphson. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000. pp. xvii + 456.

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Mikael Adolphson's book is a necessity for any scholar who deals with the twelfth through fourteenth centuries in Japan. The title, *The Gates of Power*, is a translation of the Japanese term *kenmon* 権門, which, according to the glossary, refers to "noble elites in the late Heian to early Muromachi periods, though Kuroda Toshio used it to denote any religious, military, or noble elites who coruled Japan" (p. 418). The book addresses the interplay, primarily in the late Heian and the Kamakura periods, between major monastic institutions in Japan and the government. Adolphson concentrates on what he labels "The Three Gates of Power": Enryakuji 延暦寺, Kōfukuji 興福寺, and Kōyasan 高野山.

The greatest contribution of the book is Adolphson's convincing argument that secular influence on a religious institution does not necessarily imply degeneration, as conventional wisdom holds. A glance at world history will tell us this is true. No major religious institution can survive for long without considerable financial support and, ultimately, the cooperation, either tacit or explicit, of the government of the country in which it functions. Adolphson holds that the reason the armed monks, who regularly invaded the capital and had considerable influence on official decision-making in the 1200s, have not been studied properly is simply that they have been dismissed as a manifestation of the corruption of Buddhism. This dismissal, he argues, is the result of the tendency of both scholars of religion and historians to examine religion as a phenomenon divorced from its political and social context.

The usual contention that warrior-monks were brutal, morally corrupt men is not supported by contemporary primary texts, Adolphson continues, explaining that most of the "attacks" made on the city of Kyoto by Enryakuji and Kōfukuji were ritualistic and involved little violence. He states, "They [attacks by armed monks] were a last resort in the process of litigation by which temples showed their concerns over certain policies or registered their displeasure with attempts to restrict their privileges" (p. 247). The image of the degenerate warrior-monk was created in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to turn public opinion against established temples such as Enryakuji. In fact, he points out that the term *sōhei* 僧兵, generally used these days to refer to the warrior-monks, was not coined until the early 1700s (p. 414).

Adolphson makes excellent use of a number of sources generally overlooked by scholars in both history and religious studies: diaries of aristocrats, historical novels, temple histories (*engi* 縁起), and illustrated scrolls (*emaki* 絵巻). These include the *Heike monogatari* 平家物語 and the *Hōnen shōnin eden* 法然上人絵伝. Photographic

reproductions of some of the scrolls appear in the pages of the book. Use of these sources sheds new light on a number of issues.

The book also includes something I consider indispensable yet frequently lacking in books of this kind: maps. He provides not only a map of the provinces of early Japan but also of the cities of Kyoto and Nara at the relevant time periods. Also useful as reference material are tables and diagrams of the conflicts involving Enryakuji and Kōfukuji between 1061 and 1400, and numerous genealogies of the imperial family and of aristocrats.

After a brief introduction, the text develops chronologically, moving from chapter 2, "Monastic Developments in the Heian Age," to chapter 7, "Religious Elites and the Ashikaga Bakufu: Collapsing the Gates of Power." In between are "Capital Politics and Religious Disturbances in the Shirakawa Era (1072–1129)," "Temples as Allies or Divine Enemies during the Tumultuous Years of Go-Shirakawa (1155–1192)," "Religious Conflicts and Shared Rulership in the Late Thirteenth Century," and "Protest and Fighting in the Name of the *Kami* and the Buddhas."

I do find a few aspects of Adolphson's conclusions problematic. Although his point that secular influence is not synonymous with degeneration is well taken, I nevertheless question whether one can reasonably state that warrior-monks descending on the capital, making demands and threatening violence, is not evidence of at least some corruption. Certainly Adolphson has explained convincingly why monks would have engaged in such behavior, but that does not necessarily excuse it.

In addition, his discussion in chapter 6 of the importance of the *kami* in these protests leaves several questions unanswered. The *kami* appear to have been the strongest weapon employed by the monks of Enryakuji. Warrior-monks brought the *kami* on palanquins from Mt. Hiei into the city of Kyoto, and the government, apparently fearing the wrath of these *kami*, frequently gave in to the wishes of the monks. The question remains, however, why the *kami* should have had such power. Adolphson offers the following three reasons: *kami* are more mobile than buddhas, an idea he supports by pointing out that buddha images are rarely moved; "the influence of the native deities was simply more widely felt throughout Japanese society"; and "the *kami* can be viewed as more malevolent than Buddhist deities" (p. 267).

The first two reasons are inaccurate. Buddhas are not thought to be limited to a material support in the way that the *kami* frequently are. Moreover, by the end of the twelfth century, when these protests peaked, Buddhism had a significant presence in Japan which was not limited to the elite. Pure Land Buddhism, in particular, had already established itself among many levels of society. In any case, the purpose of the attacks was to intimidate the government, an institution which had been heavily influenced by Buddhism since its entry to Japan. His third point, that the *kami* can be more malevolent than buddhas, is true but does not by itself account for the role of these *kami* in protests. Why were the *kami* so powerful that they were used by

Buddhist monks as a weapon? Admittedly, this question is so complex that it could, and perhaps should, be the topic of another book.

Last, Adolphson's discussion of Kōyasan sometimes seems tacked on as an afterthought. For a detailed early history of Enryakuji and Kōfukuji, however, and for a thought-provoking reexamination of theories which have long been unquestioned, the book is invaluable. It will be of most use to advanced graduate students and to scholars of Heian and Kamakura Japan. For these people, it should be required reading.

The Origins and Development of Pure Land Buddhism: A Study and Translation of Gyōnen's Jōdo Hōmon Genrushō. By Mark L. Blum. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. pp. xxi + 470.

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Over the past several years, a number of ground-breaking studies on Kamakura Buddhism have been published. Translations of many of the major works of the so-called "new Kamakura Buddhism" have appeared, including Hōnen's 法然 *Senchakushū* 選択集[1] and Shinran's 親鸞 writings in their entirety.[2] At the same time, influenced by Kuroda Toshio's 黒田俊雄 *kenmitsu taisei* 顕密体制 (exoteric-esoteric system) theory, which holds that the traditional Buddhist sects originating in the Nara and Heian periods continued to dominate the Japanese religious scene during the Kamakura period, scholars have begun to research other long-overlooked figures of the earlier Buddhist sects of this age, such as Myōe 明恵 (1173–1232) of the Kegon 華厳 sect.[3] Mark Blum's ambitious new study on another Kegon scholar-monk, Gyōnen 凝然 (1240–1321), is a notable addition to such studies on the thought of previously neglected Kamakura-period monks.

Gyōnen was a prominent scholar-monk of Tōdaiji 東大寺, the great temple in Nara known for its colossal statue of Vairocana Buddha. This temple was burned down by the Taira army in 1180 but was soon rebuilt and quickly reasserted itself as

[1] Senchakushū English Translation Project, trans., *Hōnen's Senchakushū: Passages on the Selection of the Nembutsu in the Original Vow*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998.

[2] Dennis Hirota, et al., trans., *The Collected Works of Shinran*. Kyoto: Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha, 1997.

[3] George J. Tanabe, *Myōe the Dreamkeeper: Fantasy and Knowledge in Early Kamakura Buddhism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992) and Mark T. Unno, "Recommending Faith in the Sand of the Mantra of Light," in *Re-Visioning "Kamakura" Buddhism*, edited by Richard K. Payne (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), pp. 167–218.